

Government investment in homes and jobs tops £1.8bn to support a housing-led recovery

Investment delivered by Homes England through the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund Forward Funding (HIF FF) has passed £1.8bn since its launch in 2017. Overall, £2.7bn of investment will be contracted through the fund, helping to accelerate the delivery of almost 175,000 homes outside of London.

Councils have been working hard to secure the investment that will support the government's target to build 300,000 new homes every year, while supporting jobs and local economies. So far, sixteen local authorities across England have secured a share of the Forward Funding.

The fund provides government money for local authorities to unlock land for new homes by building roads, bridges and sustainable travel links such as new cycling and walking routes. Better transport links will enable housing development in places that people want to live and work, while bringing brownfield sites back to life and creating new garden towns. Funding can also be used for schools, healthcare facilities and green infrastructure, such as parks.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government introduced the HIF Forward Fund in 2017. Upper-tier local authorities in England were invited to apply for capital grants of up to £250 million for infrastructure to unlock development land.

County councils and combined authorities have worked closely with city and district councils to use public funding to leverage additional commercial investment and in some cases, the fund has led to the creation of joint venture partnerships between local authorities and private sector companies. These partnerships have been key to enabling the removal of long-term barriers and viability issues.

The fund gives local authorities a financial certainty to enable them to plan for the future, as they work up schemes from design through to construction and beyond. Most projects will be delivered by March 2024.

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, the Housing Secretary, said:

"We are delivering the well-designed, quality homes the country needs and unlocking home ownership for local people. But in order to build more homes, we need to provide the infrastructure and public services to match.

"This investment through our Housing Infrastructure Fund will help to build homes where we need them the most while also supporting existing communities by ensuring they get the new roads, schools and other public services that

are needed.”

Peter Freeman, Chair of Homes England, said:

“Despite having to deal with the impact of Covid-19 on their communities, we’re delighted to be working with local authorities across England to support significant government investment in key infrastructure projects. These projects protect and create jobs, support local economies and enable the long-term supply of development land to ensure we can build much needed new homes.”

Case studies

Cumbria County Council was awarded £134m to build the Carlisle Southern Link Road, which will help to open up development land needed to create St Cuthbert’s Garden Village. The scheme includes a cycleway, bridges over a railway line and two rivers, a linking highway to Durdar/Carlisle Racecourse and a cycle link to the Cumbria Way. The infrastructure will unlock land on which 10,325 new homes will be built at St Cuthbert’s Garden Village, which will be developed around the existing villages of Carleton, Birsco, Durdar and Cummersdale.

Cambridge City Council (working in partnership with Anglian Water) was allocated £227m of forward funding to enable the delivery of around 8,000 homes and 20,000 new jobs over the next 20-plus years on a large-scale brownfield regeneration site on the edge of Cambridge. The bid was submitted by the Council last year and was promoted by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, working with Anglian Water and South Cambridgeshire District Council. In an LLP joint venture with Anglian Water, the Council overcame a long-standing major barrier to make the development viable, when it will relocate an existing wastewater treatment plant to a new site, only made possible by using HIF FF funding.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority received approval for £51.6m of HIF forward funding, to unlock the first phase of 5,557 new homes on a site of 20 hectares in the Northern Gateway, Manchester. The infrastructure works comprise land acquisition, highways, city river park, flood defences, land remediation and utilities upgrade. The Northern Gateway area covers 155 hectares of north Manchester with the overall potential for around 15,000 new homes on re-purposed industrial land, comprising a series of distinct neighbourhoods that can support the city’s growth ambitions.

Oxfordshire County Council agreed a £218m funding package with Homes England to provide greater access to the Didcot Garden Town area, improving sustainable travel for local communities and businesses. The infrastructure project will support the creation of thousands of new homes in the area and create and protect jobs. Measures will be implemented to ensure non-motorised traffic can be prioritised and active travel by walking and cycling has been planned into the schemes. Oxfordshire County Council worked in partnership with South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse district councils to deliver the infrastructure and the HIF funding is seen as essential to deliver sustainable growth in the area.

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Notes to Editors

The Housing Infrastructure Fund is administered and monitored by the government's housing agency, Homes England. The programme is helping to deliver up to 300,000 new homes across England by providing local authorities with grant funding for new infrastructure, to unlock homes in areas of greatest housing demand.

Sixteen local authorities across England have secured a share of the 20 Forward Funding agreements signed so far:

Cheshire East, Kent, Oxfordshire, North Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Swindon, Cumbria, Medway, Surrey, Cambridgeshire/Peterborough Combined Authority, Milton Keynes, Central Bedfordshire, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, North East Combined Authority.